

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

South Wilmington Boulevard Historic Archaeological District

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Jefferson to King Streets along Front Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Wilmington,

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

First

STATE

Delaware

CODE

COUNTY

New Castle

CODE

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☒ DISTRICT

☐ BUILDING(S)

☐ STRUCTURE

☐ SITE

☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC

☐ PRIVATE

☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS

☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☐ OCCUPIED

☒ UNOCCUPIED

☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED

☒ YES: UNRESTRICTED

☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE

☐ COMMERCIAL

☐ EDUCATIONAL

☐ ENTERTAINMENT

☐ GOVERNMENT

☐ INDUSTRIAL

☐ MILITARY

☐ MUSEUM

☐ PARK

☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

☐ RELIGIOUS

☐ SCIENTIFIC

☒ TRANSPORTATION

☐ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Department of Transportation, State of Delaware

STREET & NUMBER

Division of Highways P.O. Box 778

CITY, TOWN

Dover, Delaware 19901

STATE

Delaware

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

New Castle County Recorder of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

800 French St. (City-County Building)

CITY, TOWN

Wilmington,

STATE

Delaware

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Delaware Cultural Resource Survey

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Delaware Division of Historic and Cultural Affairs

CITY, TOWN

Hall of Records, Dover

STATE

Delaware

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT

☐ GOOD

☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED

☒ RUINS

☒ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED

☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE

☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Description of South Wilmington Boulevard Historic
Archaeological District is Attached

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

South Wilmington Boulevard Historic Archaeological District - Description

The South Wilmington Boulevard (SWB) Historic Archaeological District is located in the southern part of the City of Wilmington just north of the Christiana River and the Wilmington Amtrak Station and Causeway. It is bounded on the south by Front Street and includes one half of the block between Front and Second Streets. Its western boundary is Jefferson Street and its present eastern boundary is King Street.

The area of the SWB District (refer to attached maps) is in the Christiana River floodplain and sits at the bottom of the hill upon which now is located the main business district of Wilmington. The area includes the original town of Willingtown, the community which gave rise to the present city. The flood plain and most of the marsh which once fringed the Christiana River have been artificially filled and the district can be shown to have been partially modified due to this process.

The district consists of one half of seven city blocks and includes the following streets; King, Market, Shipley, Orange, Tatnall, West, Washington, and Jefferson (moving from east to west). At one time it also included Justison Street but this thoroughfare has not been in existence for some time. West Street is the boundary of the former community of Willingtown and it also marks the end of the Christiana River floodplain and the beginning of the hill upon which most of the modern city now sits.

At present the historic archaeological district contains some standing structures but these will soon be demolished as a part of the South Wilmington Boulevard project of the State Division of Highways. The archaeological survey which led to this determination of eligibility request was initiated by the Division of Highways as an integral part of the highway planning procedure. At the completion of the investigation it is expected that further phases of the highway program will be initiated. Eventually, the South Wilmington Boulevard project will involve the construction of a highway which will connect Interstate-95 to the central business district of Wilmington.

Archaeological investigations that have led to this request and which will result in a location and identification survey report have been underway for over two months. The survey is being conducted by Mid-Atlantic Archaeological Research, Inc. of Newark, Delaware and is being coordinated by Environmental/Planning of the Division of Highways with assistance from the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, State of Delaware.

The purpose of the investigation, as outlined in the scope of work, is to determine the nature of the archaeological resources existing within a portion of the South Wilmington Boulevard project area. The research strategy can be briefly summarized as follows: initially an attempt was made to determine if archaeological were present in a reasonably intact condition; this was followed by a surface search and recording of any archaeological features; features were then selected for subsurface investigation based upon a sampling strategy designed to assure

that a representative sample of historic activities conducted within the project area would be selected; finally, more intensive investigations were conducted at those locations determined to contain information concerning the various activity types known to exist within the project area.

The approach to this strategy began with a continuing historical document search. This included not only the traditional public record search but also a map search, an investigation into private papers, an existing photograph collection study and an oral history study. The historic document search has been coordinated with the archaeological field investigations. A surface study of the entire project area was conducted. Those areas that had been previously razed were checked for evidence of subsurface archaeological features. All material found was marked and identified for further investigation. Standing structures were examined and notes and photographs taken for later reference. An archaeological "monitor" was on hand during any demolition scheduled to identify the fabric of the standing structures and to add to the recording previously done in the project area. During this process of demolition several features were located.

Subsurface testing was first conducted in areas protected from public view and in which immediate data was requested by the Division of Highways. Eventually, all areas of the project were tested and features identified and/or excavated. The methods used in excavation consisted of hand excavation with appropriate tools and recording techniques. Excavation proceeded with crews of up to ten individuals and in most cases features encountered were totally excavated. A considerable amount of time was spent on working in areas that had been partially looted by local relic collectors.

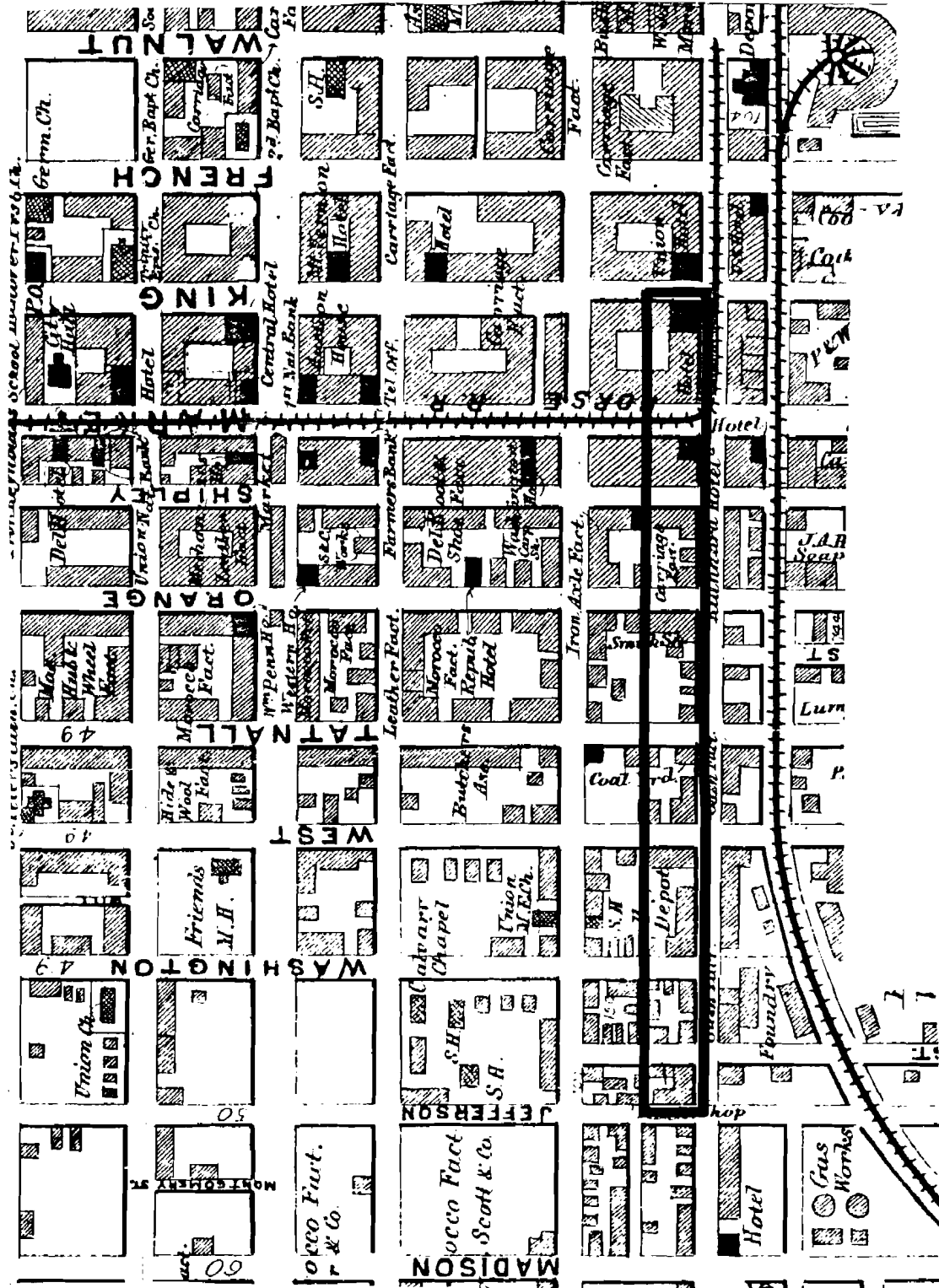
The results of the ongoing excavation program can be summarized by stating that all types of archaeological evidence found in historic site excavations have been found at the South Wilmington Boulevard Historic Archaeological District (proposed). Features include structures (standing), foundations of previously standing structures, and evidences of the construction techniques employed by the builders of the structures. Evidence of the following structures have been located: houses, commercial establishments, manufacturing structures, privies, wells, manufacturing activity areas, middens, roadways, public sewers, walks, court-yards and fence lines.

Artifacts are even more varied and numerous. Tens of thousands of items have been removed and processed. Among the categories of artifacts are: ceramic bowls, dishes, tiles, pipes, etc.; domestic items such as pins, utensils, glass ware, wooden objects; personal items such as tobacco pipes, buttons, tooth brushes, clothing; commercial items; armanent, furniture items, construction and architectural items, toys and such food items as scrap bone, plant food remains, and non-organic edible items.

Cultural material found during the excavations includes items from the period of the initial settlement of the region by residents of Willingtown (1720's) to those attributable to the later utilization of the region by industrial firms. Early items indicate both residential and commercial utilization; while the later items also includes residential or domestic artifacts more in the way of commercial and manufacturing activities can be documented.

The integrity of the archaeological record is of utmost importance to the determination of eligibility of an archaeological nomination to the National Register. An attempt was made by the investigators to determine the location and extent of intact resources by testing in the various tracts. The present district contains intact resources from all periods and representing a variety of cultural activities (see Statement of Significance). The investigations have demonstrated the lack of integrity of the archaeological record in several blocks within the study parameters and those blocks have not been included in the proposed district (Monroe Street to Jefferson Street).

Proposed South Wilmington Boulevard Historic Archaeological District



South Wilmington Boulevard Historic Archaeological
District - Statement of Significance

The proposed district contains evidence of the earliest settlement of New Castle County after that of the town of New Castle itself. It is the site of the beginnings of Delaware's largest city and it has been continuously occupied from at least 1730 to the present. The archaeological resources of the proposed district have the potential of providing information about a large series of questions that can be asked about urban developmental processes in general and about the socio-economic history of Wilmington specifically.

The following are research topics that have been proposed in the research design and are being addressed in the preliminary investigations now being conducted in a limited fashion. Most are applicable to other urban sites and many have been addressed successfully by other investigators (see Steven R. Pendery's study of "Urban Process in Portsmouth, New Hampshire; an Archaeological Perspective, 1978). Each topic can be researched at the tract being considered for Determination of Eligibility since sufficient data has been found to exist with the necessary integrity for addressing the listed questions.

1. Settlement or Community Patterning Data - what types of processes were followed in the enlargement and development of a city from its earliest beginnings? Were these processes determined by local environmental factors, historical developments and/or socio-economic factors or are they common to urbanization as a whole? Can the data from the South Wilmington Boulevard project area be used to demonstrate or refute a particular model of urban development?
2. Architectural Developments - does the Wilmington socio-economic and natural environment influence the nature of residential, commercial and industrial architecture? What types of changes can be demonstrated over time and to what can they be attributed? The archaeological record should reflect above ground architecture.
3. Socio-economic Development - It has been stated that Wilmington's central business district and elite residential districts change in patterns ways. The development of the former Willingtown to an essentially industrial and commercial district ("Barbary Coast") should be verifiable in the archaeological record, if this occurred as portrayed in local historical essays.
4. Technological Development - Within the tract being considered as a historic archaeological district developed many of Wilmington's and Delaware's technologies. Evidence about the following should be found within the archaeological record of the tract;
 - a. ceramic industry
 - b. chemical
 - c. transportation
 - d. tanning
 - e. commerce & trade
 - f. ship building
 - g. medical
 - h. smithing
 - i. service industries

5. Domestic Units - As a residential area the South Wilmington Boulevard Historic Archaeological District contains evidence of the domestic unit as it developed in a rural, town and urban setting from the first quarter of the eighteenth century through the end of the nineteenth century. Questions that can be asked of data include those concerned with the distribution activities within the individual home lot and the relation of home and livelihood as reflected in the spatial location of home work areas within the home lot. The development of home lots over time as the city became more urbanized and as the district became the industrial center of the city can be explored.
6. Manufacturing - Wilmington's development as a trading and shipping center, as a manufacturing center and as a world industrial city can be investigated. The question of how small manufacturing sites were changed, or evolved, into industrial areas is an important one. Such data exists within the project area.
7. Dietary Developments - one aspect of the archaeological record which is especially significant as a data source is the well-preserved food remains found in the wells and privies excavated to date within the district boundaries. Changes in diet should reflect socio-economic developments of Wilmington and of the eastern United States.
8. Intercity Comparisons - a considerable amount of archaeological research is being conducted in urban settings such as Philadelphia, Baltimore, Alexandria, Richmond, etc. Wilmington has much to add to the picture of urban life which is being developed through such studies. As a small city with a large industrial importance, data from the proposed district will be welcomed. The degree of dependence of early Wilmington on these larger urban centers and the reflection of life in Philadelphia upon Wilmington are other questions to be asked of the data.
9. Historical Events and Persons - this aspect of the archaeological record should not be neglected in determining the significance of the proposed district. It has been determined that several historically important individuals lived and/or owned land within the district. Events of historical importance may also be reflected in the archaeological record.

Attached is a preliminary report submitted by Mid-Atlantic Archaeological Research, Inc. to the Division of Highways which adds to the previous discussion of significance. This report illustrates that nature of research strategies and gives one example of the historical importance of the district.